

What is claimed is:

1 1. In a method for performing failure analysis on a printed circuit board having a circuit
2 trace thereon and a solder mask over the circuit trace, the improvement comprising:
3 removing the solder mask from the printed circuit board using an ultra violet laser, to
4 expose the circuit trace without damaging the circuit trace.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the ultraviolet laser has a wavelength of from about 3
2 nanometers to about 400 nanometers.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the ultraviolet laser has a wavelength from the group
2 consisting of 355 nanometers and 266 nanometers.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the ultraviolet laser is one of the group consisting of a
2 solid state laser, a gas laser, a dye laser, and an excimer laser.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the ultraviolet laser is a yttrium aluminum garnet laser.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the solder mask comprises an organic compound.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the solder mask comprises a thermosetting resin.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the solder mask comprises a film selected from the group
2 consisting of polyimide and cyanate ester resins and a dual solution photo-curing type material
3 containing an unsaturated resin that includes carboxylic acid and a polyepoxy compound.

1 9. A method comprising the steps of:

2 providing a printed circuit board having a circuit trace thereon and a solder mask over the
3 circuit trace;

4 removing the solder mask from the printed circuit board using an ultra violet laser, to
5 expose the circuit trace without damaging the circuit trace; and

6 performing failure analysis on the circuit trace of the printed circuit board.

1 10. The method of claim 8, wherein the ultraviolet laser has a wavelength of from about 3
2 nanometers to about 400 nanometers.

1 11. The method of claim 9, wherein the ultraviolet laser has a wavelength from the group
2 consisting of 355 nanometers and 266 nanometers.

1 12. The method of claim 9, wherein the ultraviolet laser is one of the group consisting of a
2 solid state laser, a gas laser, a dye laser, and an excimer laser.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the ultraviolet laser is a yttrium aluminum garnet laser.

1 14. The method of claim 9, wherein the solder mask comprises an organic compound.

1 15. The method of claim 9, wherein the solder mask comprises a thermosetting resin.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the solder mask comprises a film selected from the
2 group consisting of polyimide and cyanate ester resins and a dual solution photo-curing type
3 material containing an unsaturated resin that includes carboxylic acid and a polyepoxy
4 compound.

1 17. A printed circuit board suitable for failure analysis, the printed circuit board being
2 prepared by a method comprising the steps of:

3 providing a printed circuit board having a circuit trace thereon and a solder mask over the
4 circuit trace;

5 removing the solder mask from the printed circuit board using an ultra violet laser, to
6 expose the circuit trace without damaging the circuit trace, thereby readying the printed circuit
7 board for performing failure analysis on the circuit trace thereof.

1 18. The printed circuit board of claim 17, wherein the ultraviolet laser has a wavelength of
2 from about 3 nanometers to about 400 nanometers.

1 19. The printed circuit board of claim 17, wherein the ultraviolet laser has a wavelength from
2 the group consisting of 355 nanometers and 266 nanometers.

1 20. The printed circuit board of claim 17, wherein the ultraviolet laser is one of the group
2 consisting of a solid state laser, a gas laser, a dye laser, and an excimer laser.

1 21. The printed circuit board of claim 20, wherein the ultraviolet laser is a yttrium aluminum
2 garnet laser.

1 22. The printed circuit board of claim 17, wherein the solder mask comprises an organic
2 compound.

1 23. The method of claim 17, wherein the solder mask comprises a thermosetting resin.

1 24. The printed circuit board of claim 23, wherein the solder mask comprises a film selected
2 from the group consisting of polyimide and cyanate ester resins and a dual solution photo-curing
3 type material containing an unsaturated resin that includes carboxylic acid and a polyepoxy
4 compound.

1 25. A device suitable for failure analysis, the device being prepared by a method comprising
2 the steps of:

3 providing a substrate having a circuit trace thereon and a solder mask over the circuit
4 trace;

5 removing the solder mask from the substrate using an ultra violet laser, to expose the
6 circuit trace without damaging the circuit trace, thereby readying the substrate for performing
7 failure analysis on the circuit trace thereof.

1 26. The device of claim 25, wherein the ultraviolet laser has a wavelength of from about 3
2 nanometers to about 400 nanometers.

1 27. The device of claim 25, wherein the ultraviolet laser has a wavelength from the group
2 consisting of 355 nanometers and 266 nanometers.

1 28. The device of claim 25, wherein the ultraviolet laser is one of the group consisting of a
2 solid state laser, a gas laser, a dye laser, and an excimer laser.

1 29. The device of claim 28, wherein the ultraviolet laser is a yttrium aluminum garnet laser.

1 30. The device of claim 25, wherein the solder mask comprises an organic compound.

1 31. The device of claim 25, wherein the solder mask comprises a thermosetting resin.

1 32. The device of claim 25, wherein the solder mask comprises a film selected from the
2 group consisting of polyimide and cyanate ester resins and a dual solution photo-curing type
3 material containing an unsaturated resin that includes carboxylic acid and a polyepoxy
4 compound.